



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

STUDIES IN POLITICAL AREAS. II.¹

INTELLECTUAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF LARGE AREAS.

THE spaces into which we must fit our political ideas and plans are measured by the general space in which we live. Therefore we find special conceptions on a large scale and on a small; and it is to be observed in the individual as in the nation that these ideas expand or contract with the environing space without regard to the general law of the growth of political areas with civilization. A great territory invites to bold expansion; a small one engenders a faint-hearted huddling of the population. The range of the inward as of the outward vision is capable of being increased in every individual; and while he gauges the extent of his geographical space by his freedom of movement and his right to enjoy it, he shapes accordingly his ideas and habits: and so as a whole does a people. We see the statesman who is animated in his transactions by the spirit of his nation, measuring all claims for territory by the same standard by which the farmer lays out his fields. The Dalrymple farm near Fargo, Dakota, is just as characteristically American as the three and a half million square miles area of the United States. The political territory which has thus been acquired can be broken up again, but the idea of its greatness endures, often to be brought down after centuries from the realm of political ideals and planted again in the awakened political consciousness as a new territorial conception, and so to bear fruit, as in the recent history of Germany and Italy.

Geographical space in general, not a particular region, is estimated according to the power which must be expended for its conquest; and this power, in turn, is measured in terms of

¹ Translated by ELLEN C. SEMPLÉ.

this space, and will always grow with the expansion of the same from age to age. When Clausewitz, in his *Campaign of 1812 in Russia*, says: "The idea prevalent in Berlin was that Napoleon must founder on the great size of the Russian empire,"¹ or when Ralph Waldo Emerson, the New England sage, says, in regard to the United States of America, that it is particularly easy for their people "to originate the broadest views," the fundamental thought in such expressions is this space, which passes over into the spirit of the people, lending it wings or making it crawl. In this sense space is a political force, and not, as otherwise understood, merely a vehicle of political forces. In every great general or ruler we find a largeness of spacial conceptions often far ahead of his time, such as is quite familiar to us in the plans of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Charles the Great, or Napoleon. The quality that transforms the hero into the statesman is the insight into what is spacially possible; but the discoverer becomes famous by proving the reality of that which had been deemed spacially impossible. And the discerning historian detects behind the events themselves the glimmer of their spacial conditions, and these he brings out to our view.

Roads, the implements of war in this conquest of space, constitute one of the titles to fame of great rulers; these have been always builders of highways, canals, and bridges. The importance of the shortest routes of communication over a great territory has been first recognized by the prince and general, certainly not by the merchant who passively adapts himself to the given conditions. Not the Russian tradesman, but the Czar Nicholas I, connected St. Petersburg and Moscow by the rectilinear road which has been so often ridiculed, but is in such a high degree statesmanlike. However much an expanding trade, with its peaceful methods, may have contributed to the extension of the commercial field, still war has ever been a great school for the faculty of mastering space. When generals gain the greatest results by unexpected marches, we see in such an achievement not merely a physical exploit, but a purely intellec-

¹*Posthumous Works of General Karl von Clausewitz*, Vol. VII, p. 28.

tual element of superior spacial conception. This gain has often been lost, but in the case of Alexander and Cæsar it was preserved to the posterity, whose horizon it broadened. Again and again in history the fact is made evident that every larger land presents greater problems, and that he triumphs who finds the solution for them. Summed up, they mean a struggle for room, whereby the conception of space continually grows. In our century, North America has taught even greater lessons in the conduct of war than has Russia. In the Civil War the necessity impressed itself on both sides of making use of railroads and telegraphs in an unprecedented degree, of overcoming the wide distances with ever larger masses of cavalry, and even of returning to the old institution of winter quarters. Significant is the fact that the Confederate armies of the Southwest often consisted in half of mounted troops.

The school of space is slow. Every nation must be educated from smaller to larger spacial ideas, and this ever anew, for a lapse from the one stage into the other constantly reoccurs. National decay is in every instance the result of a deteriorated conception of space. The vacillating policy and inadequate military methods of the Romans in the first Punic war indicate the progress of the young state from a doubtful to a sure territorial dominion, destined to be led as she was by the guiding hand of historical events by way of Sicily to Libya, and thence to Iberia. Many a territorial conquest of the young Rome was forced upon her; and only her undesigned supremacy over the lands of the Mediterranean led to her final control of that which, in a political sense, constituted the world. The still unsubdued regions to the north and east were, according to Mediterranean ideas, a dangerously big country; but even then one of the weapons with which Rome conquered Greece was its superior capacity for territorial control. It is very interesting to follow the changes in spacial conception from lands of such clearly defined boundaries as Sicily and the Iberian peninsula. In the eyes of Rome they had already become comparatively small; measured by the standard of the Middle Ages, they were as

large as they had formerly seemed to Carthage ; now they are again ordinary provinces and medium states.

The school of space is made easier by the fact that a growing state of the same dimensions as one whose territorial development is arrested will, nevertheless, always seem greater ; for a part of its future greatness is added, in the sight of our mind's eye, to that which we actually behold and comprehend. The possibility of growth magnifies the image of the expanding state, for never is it seen with sharply defined outlines, but stretching out from its hopeful present indefinitely into the future.

Finally, we must not forget the effects of space which have to do only with relative extent. Contracted mountain districts lend a feeling of nearness to nature to their inhabitants, so far as these do not huddle together in the valleys. In contrast to the townsman, the countryman enjoys the possibility of a more free development of his personality, since he has more room and comes less often into contact with his fellow-men. The historic characteristics of the German forest folk, of the agricultural village community, and the city-state, have a certain connection with the wider or narrower area at the disposal of the clan and the individual.¹

The capacity for territorial conquest, which forms one element in "the qualities of a ruler," or in "a talent for organization," must meet a similar endowment in the people, if it is to lead to an enduring extension of political area. The combination of ability for far-reaching territorial dominion on the part of individuals, with activity and adaptability in the masses, attains the greatest results. From it the historical achievements of a people derive both a certain swing and permanence, as was formerly shown by the German colonization in what forms today the northeast of Germany, and later by the Anglo-Saxon settlements in North America and Australia. As the territory has grown, this combination has come to be a system, whose methods and

¹ Von Wietersheim traces the contrast between the Roman government and the German clan-community back to the narrow and broad territories from which they were respectively sprung. *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung*, Vol. I, p. 347.

aims are shown with unusual clearness by the history of the United States. There we see the expansive policy of the state, not merely supported, but also prepared for, by the bold advance and spread of farmer and merchant, as well as of discoverer and soldier. The spirit of expansion goes through the whole people, who, as they spread industrially, clear the way for political extension. This combination became historic when the economic system peculiar to the southern plantations, with their ever-growing demands for fresh territories, stamped upon the policy of the United States the expansive tendency which rapidly, one after the other, drew into its political control the Mississippi basin, Texas, and the whole West as far as the Pacific Ocean, and, except for the rupture with the northern states, would have pushed still farther south towards Central America and the West Indies. Here the political expansion went far in advance of the industrial. But, if today we see European statesmen inclined to look upon the Pan-American schemes of the North American as political phantasies, on the other hand we must consider the growing economic influence of the citizens of the United States, especially in Cuba and Mexico. He who takes cognizance of this situation and preparation does not get an impression of something chimerical, but much rather calls to mind how the colonial policy of the Germanic races in particular has always possessed a certain character of health and endurance, just because it advanced on soil industrially prepared, or went hand in hand with industrial expansion, never forgetting "the immense size of the physical problem." From this point of view greater significance is to be attached to the railroad lines of northern Mexico, built with North American capital, to the mining and industrial investments of the North Americans there, and to the Panama and Andes lines. We think we see in them the veins through which political influence finds its way. A similar cause explains the success of the Chinese in welding to their old empire, which was the smaller, the lands of Mongolia and Manchuria, with an area nine times that of Germany. It was the slow, thorough work of these smallest forces, politically

directed and protected, which conquered with the plow these 2,170,000 square miles, and took such deep root there that France since 1883 has been attacking them in Tongking in vain.

To the historians of Roman, German, and English expansion an air of health seems to breathe through those times when political policy stood in close connection with the labor of the people; but they are often unable to give any explanation of its nature. The element of health lay just in this connection. Whenever we see industrial expansion proceeding upon a soil where it immediately leads to political results also, as is still the case in America today, there we first recognize the causes of so many barriers and restrictions in Europe, where history has become a crowding process and where industrial interests and politics must be scrupulously held apart. In a similar way we see the statesmen and geographers of Europe trying, in non-European questions, to get rid of the small conceptions which Europe inspires. Sir J. Strachey, in his lectures on "India" (1888), designed for the use of practical politicians, emphasizes again and again the necessity of conceiving India as a world in itself, between whose countries and peoples a greater difference obtains than between those of Europe.

It is very instructive to compare the history of the German races in North America with that of the two great Latin colonial powers, Spain and France, whose settlements have been almost everywhere separated from the former. Spain sent out enough bold and industrious colonists, who rapidly spread out to California and to the La Plata; but the political organization which it gave to these lands was never adequate to the needs of young communities widely scattered and living under entirely different conditions. The federative movement which broke out at the beginning of this century is clearly the necessary rebound from the absurdity of dividing a mammoth empire, which extended through one hundred degrees of latitude, into three sub-kingdoms—Peru, Mexico, and New Granada, which was not added till the eighteenth century. France, on the other hand, showed a profound understanding for the organization of a truly con-

tinental power according to the geographic conditions; but she lacked the colonists with which to carry out completely her beautiful plan of connecting the river basins of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi through the inland sea of the great lakes.¹

An energetic people quickly spreads over a wide territory, seeking out first the places with highly favorable conditions and using most rapidly those advantages which are most accessible. Something of the power which is employed to overcome the distances is applied to the industrial undertakings, which in turn derive therefrom a greater degree of activity. The general advantageous conditions for production and trade, with their large profits and big wages, are still more stimulating in their effect. The resources of the new soil are ruthlessly exploited. Superficially and monotonously, cultivation and exhaustion follow, and in field, forest, and mine quickly degenerate into the most wasteful exploitation. All the early processes of production in North America are those of a landowner who, with little labor, works an immense area for quick, high returns. In Russia, as in North America and Australia, therefore, we see the same phenomenon: every new branch of production after a few years falls into a crisis as a result of feverish over-production in "the hot-house air of colonial enterprise." And in these countries, as in all similar regions, we hear the demand for more routes of communication, because the exploitation of the ground spreads more rapidly than the highways and railroads, and it tries to find markets for its redundant products. Finally it wants more ground when that which is available will no longer yield enough with the superficial methods of cultivation employed; that is, it seeks political expansion. In this light, the question of the agricultural competition of North America with Europe is essentially a question of space. Max Sering says that one of the chief tasks of his report on the agricultural competition of North

¹ "Throughout their effort in North America the French showed a capacity for understanding the great questions of political geography . . . They seemed to have understood the possibilities of the Mississippi valley a century and a half before the English began to understand them." U. S. SHALER, in the introduction to Vol. IV, of Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, p. xxiii.

America is "to show how much room in North America is still available for colonization, and under what conditions the cultivated area can be still farther extended."¹ And in North America itself the question how much farming and pasture land can be reclaimed by artificial irrigation from the prairies of the arid West is just as vital as fifty years ago was the question of the acquisition of new territories to replace the Virginia and Carolina tobacco and cotton fields which had become too small and to a certain extent exhausted. Irrigation and immigration are two nearly related problems of the North America of today.

When set to the task of filling and using a wide territory, a people transforms itself into a great industrial organism of exploitation, and in all the outward forms of its national life can be detected the influence of this economic ideal. Someone has said of the North Americans that only religion and business share with one another in the interests of the people.² An economic kernel crops out in all political questions. Even the profoundly agitating conflict between the free and slave states was, in the last analysis, made inadjustable by the parallel antagonism between the industrial and commercial northern states, and the plantation states of the South, who were for free trade. In the work of cultivation the impulse towards expansion is the great power-wheel whose force is communicated to all activities of life, drawing these along with it in its train. It is constantly trying to make politics subservient to itself, and this latter tendency particularly, working after the manner of world-powers, is always a menace to states of medium size.

¹ *Die landwirthschaftliche Konkurrenz Nordamerikas in Gegenwart und Zukunft*, p. 62. 1887.

² The same thing is true of Australia. "The politics of Queensland are so essentially the product of the development of its natural wealth that it is impossible to speak of them without beforehand describing the country. With few exceptions the best men of the colony are employed in developing its resources. Most of the political questions have their origin in the material needs of at least a part of the colony. No political agitation lasts long unless it brings material loss or gain and none appears unimportant as soon as it does this."—Letters from Queensland by the *Times* special correspondent, London, p. 93. 1893.

The broad area of a Russia or United States exerts an influence not merely through its own greatness, but also through the greatness of that which it embraces. Russia unites to our conception of its immense superficial extent the imposing monotony of its plains, the massive heights of the Caucasus, unparalleled in Europe, the greatness of its river systems and lakes, and the largest inland sea in the world, all of which only help to magnify the general impression. The larger a geographical space is, so much a truer picture of the earth does it form, even in regard to the proportions of the different telluric phenomena which are to be found within its area. This fact contributes to the development of a certain breadth of view in the spirit of the people who inhabit and rule such a land. Still truer it is that the larger their territory, so much the more diverse is their contact with nature. The problem of gaining the mastery over space brings man every moment face to face with the things of nature; the result is a literal and material tendency of thought. "To see in everything the immediate purpose and the reality of life," the Russians say, is the effect of the work of cultivation upon Russian soil. The same practical quality goes through the North Americans and the Australians. People from large territories are, therefore, better practical geographers than those from small countries. England and the United States, as formerly Rome, have a politico-geographical insight which contrasts singularly with their meager knowledge of theoretical geography. In a great stretch of territory, differences in the character of the country and in nature as a whole become less conspicuous; many disappear altogether against the broad horizon. Not only the mind's eye sees them so, but the will of the people in political matters tends to regard them in the same way; it attaches to them no importance, rather ignores them. Because France and Spain are destined for separate political existences by the pronounced articulation of the outline of southwest Europe, the Pyrenees perform the function of mountain barrier. Germany, so poor in natural boundaries, lays stress upon the importance of the Vosges. But

the Ural mountains lose their height between the broad plains of northeast Europe and northwest Asia. Further, because of the similarity of the country on both sides of the Urals, this barrier exerts still less effect; it is simply a dividing line between the two halves of the empire, which in point of land and climate are one, and are in a fair way to become one in point of population also. The fact that it is the most undivided of all continental powers contributes to the marked character of Russia.

Just as the struggle for existence in the plant and animal world always centers about a matter of space, so the conflicts of nations are in great part only struggles for territory; and in all wars of modern history acquisition of land has been the prize to be gained by victory. In every historical age nations may be classified according to their idea of political space. That "magnificent understanding and organization of affairs," in which Mommsen found the Romans in the beginning inferior to Pyrrhus and Mithridates, is the political sense of space which enabled the Anglo-Saxon races in the old and new worlds to get the best and largest colonial lands. It produces in North America a broad territorial policy, which almost from the beginning has been awake to territorial advantages. These it is always trying to increase, and in the process, unconsciously, an excellent practical geographical understanding has been shown in great projects, like those in Nicaragua, Hawaii, and Alaska, as also in small questions of boundary, like that of the Haro Strait. This sense can never become so developed in western and central Europe on account of the impossibility of acquiring larger territories. The European system of small, but intensively utilized, areas is inferior to the former just because it cannot be the system of the future, which, without intermission, today and for centuries, has been aiming to produce greater territories. The larger spacial conception necessarily falls into conflict with the smaller; but even when it has been defeated, its principle has always carried off the victory, for the successful smaller territory has enlarged its area. As a rule, though, a small territory in conflict with a larger one is doomed to an early over-

throw. We see the European colonists in the two Americas appearing upon the scene, armed with a superiority in which their larger conception of space very soon made itself felt as the quality most fraught with victory. The Indians were fettered by their limited ideas in this regard; the Europeans came with designs upon stretches of country reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and only one hundred years after the first discovery their different governments tried to divide up the two continents.¹ The Indians were powerless against the mere spacial magnitude that was developing here, for which they lacked both comprehension and standard of measure. Voluntarily they relinquished much land which had for them no value, filled out the empty border regions between the tribes, and recognized too late how the separate acts of withdrawal followed fast one after the other, according to a plan to them unintelligible, like the threads of a net whose meshes rapidly grow smaller. Two hundred years after the first modest settlements of the whites, the Indians had lost even the Alleghanies, and warning came that not even the Mississippi was the natural boundary of the new government.

Still greater was the chasm between the two conceptions of political area in other regions, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. The colonists came there in the early years of the nineteenth century with even a broader geographical horizon and with more efficient means of transportation and communication; and they found natives who did not see out beyond their hunting district. In a much deeper sense than that of its usual application in European history does the saying become true here that two ages meet, one fast bound in narrow spacial conceptions, and one soaring on the wings of its big territorial ideas; and in this conjunction lies the destructive and recreative force in the history of these youthful lands.

A similar contrast is to be found between pastoral peoples, who are accustomed to a wide range of country, and permanent settlers, who live close together. The former want land on the

¹ The treaty of 1629, which gave to France Canada, Cape Breton, and the boundless region of Acadia, really prepared the way for the division of North America.

scale of their thinly populated steppes. In times past the Germans appeared with the large demands of a sparse nomadic population before the Romans, Celts, and others, who were already crowded in their territory and about to fall into decay. The kingdoms of the extensive highlands of Asia Minor and Iran loomed up upon the horizon of the Greek mind as states of unheard-of magnitude, and the impression left by these new territorial dimensions was a profound one. Lydia had been an enormously big country to them; Persia seemed to them a world in itself. They learned too late that the fundamental lack of their city-states was their limited area.

The expansion of a state is growth, and, in so far, an organic change which necessarily has a retroactive effect upon the whole. At first an external phenomenon, in the course of time it will without fail penetrate into the interior. This holds good even of the process of growth, which involves the expenditure of force externally with a corresponding diminution of internal achievement; but much more is it true of the condition which ensues at the end of a period of growth. The more the energies of a people are directed towards an outside aim, the less conscious do they become of any internal friction. Here lies the secret of the wonderful air of health that breathes through the history of the Hanse towns; during a period of lamentable decay in the rest of the German empire, they were held firmly together by the bond of a common interest in their expansion along the Baltic. The new territory into which a people grows is a spring from which the feeling of nationality draws new life. If it permits extensive colonization it rejuvenates a people by drawing off the redundant population. The ancients knew the healing power of emigration for internal evils; and no country has experienced this effect more than England, whose existence cannot now be thought of apart from its uninterrupted expansion and the consequent peaceful internal development of the land itself. Undertakings aiming at extension of territory simply possess the advantage of being easily understood. If they result in an improvement of the geographical situation, they tend to

strengthen the union of the whole, as in the case of Russia's expansion to the Black Sea or that of the United States to the Pacific through the acquisition of one and a half million square miles of territory. The disintegrating tendencies in the extreme east and west of Canada did not abate till the Dominion had learned to value and utilize, both politically and economically, the huge, continent-like territory which lay between the two oceans. The strength of a space not yet filled up lies in the future, in its wealth of hopes and plans. Russia's great territory in the north, east, and southeast must make amends for much that is unsatisfactory in the condition of the older, more densely populated provinces. The great dreams of its endless possibilities awaked by its possession lure the judgment far away from the hard circumstances near at hand, which the people feel they may at any time throw off by migration.

Conflicts, which in narrow, congested quarters are always working deeper, tend to become more superficial when they find room to spread out and make different combinations. In larger territories racial differences and prejudices are less pronounced, and particularly true in this sense is the expression, "the rationalism of colonial peoples." Germans and French are not so antagonistic to one another in Africa as in Europe. Only where the home governments purposely carry their political principles into their distant territories also do these come to a clash, as, for instance, when the Seven Years' War was transplanted to the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence. The great enterprises of colonizing England promoted the union of England and Scotland, just as the wide field which Russia offered in Asia caused many a German, Polish, and Armenian arm to devote itself more willingly to the service of the empire. The colonial policy of Germany, too, has in this sense a national importance. Even in the unnecessarily noisy foreign policy of the United States it is difficult to get rid of the thought that this, also, is intended to draw off the ever active forces of political disintegration from mischief. In the earlier decades, when the conflict between the North and South had not yet been fought out, this

was undoubtedly the animating cause of the expansive policy which found vent against Mexico in 1848.

The larger a compact territory grows, the simpler become its foreign relations, the smaller in proportion its periphery, and the greater its internal equilibrium. In this century the United States have pushed France, Spain, England (in the Oregon claim), Mexico, and Russia, one after the other, out of the present federal territory; and even in such a narrow region as the San Juan de Fuca Strait they have simplified their situation. Consequently, in their internal development we find no conflict of different influences emanating from neighboring states. Even the various European influences, so diverse in their origin, unite on their way towards the west, like a backward flowing Gulf Stream, into one single current of European civilization. The United States compare themselves in point of civilization with only a single Europe, for they themselves form just as great a whole. For such a country the questions of its foreign policy are larger, more enduring, and simpler. Kriegk¹ is right when he says of Russia that for that country the foreign policy is more important than for any other state of Europe, with the exception of England; but the cause of this lies not so much in the immense size of Russia as in the great multiplicity of its European and Asiatic neighbors. In this regard, too, the United States have a decided advantage and for that reason form without doubt the most fortunate type of the "new country." They border on British Canada and Mexico; Russia, on Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Rumania, Turkey, Persia, several small states of central Asia, China, and Corea—something like twelve neighbors as compared with two.

But in spite of this important difference, for both of these countries the law holds good that the length of the frontier line becomes relatively smaller with the increase of political area. If larger states have in proportion shorter boundaries than small states, then they necessarily meet all external disturbances with a greater power of resistance. Consider how rapidly the wounds

¹G. C. KRIEGK, *Schriften zur allgemeinen Erdkunde*, p. 213. 1840.

of the Crimean war and of the Civil War in North America healed; how undisturbed the war of 1812 with England left the development of the United States towards the West. In all these cases, only a small part of the whole could suffer directly from the depredations of war.

FRIEDRICH RATZEL.

UNIVERSITY OF LEIPZIG.